



Representative

**Beverly
Woods**

23rd District

Committees:

Transportation
Capital Budget
Rules
Legislative Transportation Committee

Also:

Tariff Policy Board
Puget Sound Regional
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A Report On The 2002 Legislative Session

Dear Friends,

This newsletter covers a few of the many pieces of legislation we addressed this year. I hope you find it informative. I enjoy my work and was pleased to be appointed as a key negotiator on the transportation budget again this year. I was also voted as one of the leaders of our caucus before the beginning of the session. I feel that these assignments can only help me represent you better in Olympia.

This session finally brought agreement on how to pay for transportation investments, including new ferries for Kitsap County, and the new Tacoma Narrows Bridge. I also helped pass legislation that will lend a hand to moms participating in the state's WorkFirst program, as well as a new law that will better protect veterans' records and hopefully reduce chances for identity theft.

While many good laws were adopted, I am very concerned that the budget which funds state government operations with your tax dollars has once again set the stage for huge tax increases, or huge cuts in vital public services. I also wish more had been done to seriously address the fundamental causes of our state's financial troubles.

Please take a few minutes to read this brief report on how actions taken during the 2002 session affect you.

It has been a great privilege to serve as your state representative these past two years. Remember, I am your representative all the time, not just when the Legislature is in session. If you need help dealing with a government agency, or have questions about something the Legislature did this year, please send me a letter or e-mail, or call. I am always happy to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Beverly Woods

Beverly Woods

Finally – funding for more passenger-only ferries

Bringing passenger-only ferry service to more locations on the Kitsap Peninsula will mean greater convenience for our families and employers, as well as less congestion on roads like Highway 305. I was very pleased to secure legislative backing for new passenger-only ferries that will serve the Kingston-Seattle and Southworth-Seattle routes, and complement the passenger-only boat that runs from Bremerton. The \$7.7 billion transportation referendum you'll see on the Nov. 5 ballot includes \$51.3 million for new boats and terminals for Kingston and Southworth.

I had support for the passenger-only ferries lined up last summer, until the transportation talks broke down. No one outside of Kitsap realizes just how badly we need these ferries, so when I was asked to be on the transportation negotiating team again this year, I made them my number-one goal.

Passenger-only ferries – unlike auto ferries – are not considered to be part of Washington's "marine highways." They can't be funded with revenue from the state gas tax. So the money for the foot ferries will come from the 1 percent sales tax increase on vehicle purchases included in the transportation referendum.

The 10-year funding package contains \$693.4 million for the state ferry system beyond what is already being received. Besides the new Kingston and Southworth foot ferries, it will provide another \$47.2 million for overall passenger-only ferry operations; \$321.9 million to replace four 1927-vintage auto ferries, and another \$100.2 million on "catch-up" preservation costs for vessels and terminals.



New Narrows bridge within sight

Like many of you, I want to see a new bridge across the Tacoma Narrows built as soon as possible to relieve traffic congestion, save lives, help employers and workers, and create new construction jobs.

It's too bad the bridge construction was delayed so long by the duel between the Senate and House bridge bills. The financing question could have and should have been settled last year, because every month lost added millions of dollars to the price tag, and that means tolls will stay on longer. However, I am pleased I was able to amend the House bill before it passed, to ensure tolls will be removed once the bridge construction bonds have been paid off.

This year's budget repeats last year's mistakes

It was no surprise that the operating budget approved last June turned out to be unsound. It spent almost \$700 million more than the amount of revenue the state expected to collect. As I feared then, the state economy continued to slide, and we started this session with a shortfall of more than \$1 billion.

I went to Olympia in January expecting to help make the difficult choices that would bring spending back in line with revenue. That didn't happen. Instead, the new budget goes twice as far into the red, compared to last year's plan, by spending \$1.4 billion more than the state expects to collect in revenue.

This budget also relies more than ever on "one-time" money to pay for day-to-day operations. It includes \$325 million taken from the state's emergency fund, which now has just \$53 million. Second, it includes \$450 million raised by selling off a big chunk (expected to be at least 20 percent, or more than \$1 billion) of Washington's future payments from the national tobacco settlement. This money could have gone toward stabilizing our public health care system for many years. Instead, it will be literally gone in 14 months.

Report to the 23rd District

I am also very concerned that, in the course of adopting this budget, the protections created by Initiative 601 in 1993 were essentially eliminated. Now, instead of a vote by two-thirds of legislators, it takes only a simple-majority vote to increase your taxes.

Also, keep a few things in mind if you hear claims this new budget makes tough choices. First, it increases state spending nearly 7 percent from 1999-2001, even though our state is seeing its worst revenue decline in two decades.

The state treasurer and attorney general, both Democrats, have criticized using the tobacco money to plug the budget hole, and I agree. Besides hurting our state's health-care system, it postpones the tough decisions that must be made sooner or later. The state auditor, also a Democrat, recently said he would be surprised if we don't get called back to Olympia before the end of the year to deal with the budget. I hope he's wrong.

Capital budget includes projects good for Kitsap

The Bremerton Readiness Center received \$10.9 million in the 2001-03 capital budget adopted last year, the result of a lot of hard work by me and the other members of the Kitsap delegation. This year, as we developed the supplemental budget, I helped secure an additional \$1.6 million needed for the project.

Also this year, the supplemental budget includes \$500,000 for pier repairs on Bremerton's waterfront, and \$2 million for construction at Bainbridge Island's Puget Sound Environmental Learning Center.

Olympic College received close to \$6 million in the capital budget I helped pass last year. This session we added \$1.4 million for building improvements.

As a member of the House Capital Budget Committee, I worked diligently to obtain this additional funding for Kitsap County in the 2002 supplemental budget, and voted in favor of these projects. However, I could not support the accompanying bonding bill that would allow state government to bond above its debt limit, and use education construction funds – intended for K-12 construction – for other uses.

Working to keep Kitsap ready for emergencies

Between the three Kitsap military installations and ports, their counterparts around Puget Sound and even Grand Coulee Dam, or Hanford, our state is at risk of being targeted for a terrorist attack. I supported the full package of community security measures developed by the bipartisan House Select Committee on Community Security. These bills, including the Washington Anti-Terrorism Act of 2002, would have made Washington less vulnerable to terrorist attacks and more prepared in the event of an attack, without infringing on our freedoms. Unfortunately, the Senate rejected those bills.

We tried again by adding many of their provisions to Senate Bill 6704. Most of my Kitsap colleagues in the House joined me in supporting the revised measure, but the Senate refused to agree with the amended bill, and it did not pass.

Making our schools safer

This session brought the passage of House Bill 1444, the "anti-bullying" bill I co-sponsored. It essentially tells school districts to have their own policies on harassment, intimidation and bullying in place by August 2003.

This new law can only help make sure our schools provide a safe learning environment, using standards that are defined not from Olympia but at the local district level. I expect it to complement the laws against bullying, intimidation and harassment that are already on the books.



Rep. Woods, a leading legislative voice on transportation, was successful in addressing the Kitsap region's transportation needs.



Representative *Beverly Woods*

Between now and November

Because all 98 seats in the House (including mine) will be on the ballot in November, I am limited to two legislative "mailings" to you, my constituents, in 2002 – and this is the second one.

Although I won't be able to mail more news your way before November, I do plan to spend a lot of time talking with people around the 23rd District over the next several months. Hopefully I'll get a chance to talk with you. If you see me first, and want to let me know what's on your mind, don't hesitate. There's a lot of information about the budget and transportation and other issues that wouldn't fit in this letter. My town hall meetings also are great opportunities to exchange ideas and concerns, and I hope to see you at one of them!

TOWN HALL MEETINGS

Tuesday, June 4 • 6:30 - 8 p.m.

Kingston Cove Yacht Club

Kingston

Thursday, June 6 • 6:30-8 p.m.

**Central Kitsap Fire
& Rescue Station 51**

10955 Silverdale Way NW, Silverdale

INSIDE:

- Funding for new ferries & bridge
- Budget is cause for concern
- Community security
- Safer schools

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Washington State
Department of Printing

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